

What if her teammates didn't find out the right way?

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Category: Young Justice

Genre: Angst, Friendship

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2016-04-07 18:51:36

Updated: 2016-04-12 06:24:42

Packaged: 2016-04-27 22:19:51

Rating: T

Chapters: 11

Words: 15,517

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: What if Artemis didn't tell her teammates? What if they found out by figuring it out? Artemis has a choice: she can kill Kitty and earn the loyalty of her team, or she can let Kitty go and earn resentment. BTW I actually speak Vietnamese, just too lazy to do it. LOL. T because of mentions of suicide. Peace out. :) And please review!

1. Artemis

****What would happen if... the Team didn't find out the right way?
Hmm... ;)****

****Enjoy!****

****Disclaimer: Disclaimed.****

"Artemis," Jade whispers.

I've got her cornered against a wall and my arrow is aimed at her heart. If I release, she'll be dead.

I could kill her.

"Artemis," Jade says again.

"What?" I snap.

The Team is watching. I can feel them.

I don't want to hurt Jade.

I don't want the Team to find out.

I'm torn.

How did it come to this?

"Artemis. Remember," Jade breathes.

I close my eyes, just for a brief second, and then all the memories run through my mind.

Me, crying into Jade's shoulder. Jade, comforting me when Momma was in prison. Me, wiping away the tears and the blood running down Jade's cheeks that were put there by Dad's horrible beatings. Jade, smiling at me with those brown eyes. Me, tickling her until she cried from laughter. Jade, hugging me good-bye. Me, crying when I realized that I would never see Jade again.

Jade is my sister.

Cheshire isn't.

But they are the same person! Killing one would mean... killing the other!

"Artemis?" Wally's voice breaks through my thoughts. "Come on. Do it."

Out of the corner of my eye, I can see M'gann. Her green skin is ripped at the shoulder and blood is trickling out. She's in pain, so much pain, because the wound was probably poisoned. I know it's nothing lethal, but it's enough to make a grown Martian pass out.

Conner is supporting her, a scowl on his face.

Cheshire did that. Cheshire hurt my Team.

I had the choice. I could kill my sister. Did she really deserve it? She had hurt M'gann. And M'gann had only ever been kind to me. But Jade had been kind to me, too, before Cheshire.

I took a deep breath.

And my eyes start to water and they sting so badly. I want to let the tears spill out. But I'm Artemis Crock. Yeah, I'm Artemis Crock and Artemis Crock never cries. No Crock ever cries. Unless it's something really drastic. But I never cried when Dad shot me. I never cried when Dad beat me. I never cried when I was forced to fight Dad for the first time.

My nose hurts and my eyes hurt and my hands are shaking and I don't know what to do and everything is closing in on me because this is the final decision that will change my life forever-

"Artemis," Robin says softly.

I look at him in surprise as I stifle a sob.

His mask is on, but I can see past that. I know what his startingly blue eyes look like and how deep and wise and understanding they are. Because he goes to my school. Duh. Figured that out, ages ago.

"I understand."

My heart freezes.

He knew. He knew and he knows and he's known all along. I can feel it. His gaze is understanding and it's comforting and he's telling me that whatever decision I make, he's not going to let them kick me off.

"Robin-" my voice cracks.

"It's okay," he says quietly.

I can feel the Team's accusing stares burning holes into my back. And Jade is watching behind her Cheshire mask, and I know that if the positions were switches, Jade wouldn't kill me. She wouldn't.

Would I kill her?

The arrow quivers against the string. I curse myself inwardly. I'm not concentrating enough.

"Alice."

My head snaps up at the pet name. Jade's looking at me. Not Cheshire. Somehow she managed to get her mask off. It's lying on the floor by my feet.

"Kitty," I whisper back.

Alice and Cheshire, Sportsmaster's two once-little daughters. Jade had named me Alice, and I had named her Cheshire. But I never really liked the name Cheshire, because it sounded so dark when I picked it, so I just called her Kitty instead. She didn't like it. But I didn't care.

I remember, sitting on the couch, Mom next to me in her wheelchair and we're watching TV. I can see the new villain, Cheshire, in plain view, and I see the way she fights and the way she moves and her name's Cheshire, and it all falls into place.

Mom and I both didn't want to admit it back then. We didn't want to fathom the idea that another one of our family became a criminal.

"_I'm sorry_," Kitty whispers. "_I'm sorry that it had to come to this._" Vietnamese is falling off her tongue. She doesn't want Conner hearing our conversation and picking up on it.

I narrow my eyes at her. "_I don't understand._"

"_You should've told them. Not let them figure it out by themselves. But it's too late now_," Kitty murmurs in my ear. "_All you can do is tell them now and hope for the best._"

I choke back a surprised sob.

Here I was, next to Cheshire, who was Kitty, who was also Jade. And instead of being Cheshire, she's Kitty again. She's Kitty and she's the big sister again. She's giving me advice and she's telling me what to do and she's being all sister-like and I love her so much but it'll be so much easier for the Team if I just-

I can't think about it. I can't even think about killing Kitty.

Why is this so hard?

I don't know. Maybe it's because Cheshire and Kitty and Jade are all the same person.

But Kitty is the sweetest version of Jade.

And Cheshire is the cruelest version of Jade.

And Jade is somewhere in between.

"I love you," Kitty says.

And I know she's not saying it to save her life. I know she's not saying it so I'll let her go. I know she's not saying it just to say it. I know that she means it, that she actually means it.

Those three words, spoken from the depths of Kitty's heart, thaw mine.

The Team watches in confusion, fear and anger as I slowly lower the arrow.

Kitty lets out a sigh of relief and she grabs her mask, bringing it to her face.

"I love you, too, Kitty," I whisper before she puts the mask on.

All the Team understands is that one word: Kitty. I've said it twice in front of them, and both times the word was full of love, and they can put two and two together.

I hear Wally's anguished cry of refusal to believe what I just said.

Before she slides the mask over her face, she leans forward. Quickly. And her lips brush my forehead.

I hear the Team gasp. Even Robin. Because even he wasn't expecting that.

And then Kitty is Cheshire.

And then she has melted into the shadows.

And then my Team is letting out a despairing cry when they realize that Cheshire's gone.

I force myself to turn around and look at them.

Iron bands close around my heart.

Kaldur: he's silent and calm. Or at least, that's the first image you get when you look at him. But his emotions are inside his eyes- he's feeling broken and betrayed.

M'gann: she's unconscious. Thank God. Her face would've been the worst of them all, considering that me and her are- _were_- close to sisters.

Conner: his face is a mask of pure rage and he's using every ounce of will to stop himself from hurling a punch at me.

Zatanna: she's barely just joined the team after the whole Dr. Fate incident. But her face is confused. Just confused. She doesn't understand. But I bet if she uses her magic, she can recall what we said and translate it from Vietnamese to English.

And then there's- there's-

Wally.

His face is painted all over with emotion. His green eyes are filled with fear and anger and confusion and rage and basically everything that the entire team is feeling. And his gaze is smoldering hot.

I hate myself. But I had to do what I had to do.

He glares at me and spits, "I trusted you."

Three words. Enough to make me fall to my knees, my face in my hands, and start sobbing.

I can see his face slightly soften when he noticed how hard I was crying, but then the initial hardness is back and he's speeding away.

"Artemis?" Zatanna says softly.

I can't answer. I'm crying too hard. Because the Team is turned against me now, now that they know.

"I-" she pauses. "I-"

I wait.

"Come talk to me when you're ready," she finishes.
"_Etativel_."

She's winging away.

"THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!" Superboy rages and he points to M'gann, who's still unconscious.

"Hey-" Robin tries.

And I know that Superboy knows that it wasn't really my fault that M'gann got poisoned (like I said, nothing lethal because Cheshire knows better than to hurt my team fatally) but he means that it's all my fault I didn't avenge her. But I don't think Superboy knows that M'gann isn't fatally poisoned.

Then Conner's jumping away, careful not to jostle M'gann as he leaves.

Kaldur, me, and Robin. It's just us.

Kaldur stares at me.

He just leaves. Not saying a word.

Robin lays a hand on my shoulder. "Hey, it's going to be okay. Stop crying, Arty. Please," he tries.

I don't even respond. Even though I hate the name _Arty_.

"Come on," Robin says, grabbing my hand and pulling me up.

I try to wipe the wetness away from my face, but it's impossible because more wetness spills out of my eyes.

And Robin's using his grappling hook to swing us up to the nearest rooftop. We're swinging from roof to roof, following the distant blob that's Zatanna. And the blob that's Superboy. And the blob that's Kaldur.

But I don't see Wally. Wally's gone already. Him and his superspeed.

Wally's reaction was probably the worst of them all.

Robin doesn't say anything. Probably because he's too focused, trying to hold me up and himself at the same time on one grappling hook. I feel sorta bad, because he's not used to handling this much weight. But I'm still crying, crying too hard to support my own weight.

Forget what I said about me never crying. About _Artemis _never crying. Because right now, Artemis Crock _needs _to cry, even if it's the first time in seven years.

"Sorry you had to go through this, Alice," Jade whispers from the shadows, watching as her baby sister cries and her other teammate, the Boy Wonder, flies away with Artemis clinging onto him.

She hates to see her sister cry.

But Alice needed to, even if it was the first time in seven years.

****Wow. That took a lot more time than I expected. And it's a lot longer. I don't know how the story kept dragging out. But i think it's good. Tell me what you think, okay? (That's code for REVIEW!) And BTW, I actually speak Vietnamese, but I'm too lazy to actually translate it out. So... LOL. Review!****

****Look****

****v****

****Down****

****v****

****Here****

****V****

****Where****

****V****

****I am**

****V****

****Writing****

****V****

****This****

****V****

****While****

****V****

****Making****

****V****

****The Most****

****V****

****Adorable**

****V****

****Puppy-dog****

****V****

****Eyes****

****V****

****Ever.****

****Can't you just feel the cuteness of those puppy-dog eyes? They're begging you to review?****

****Besides, you read all the way down here. What's another ten seconds gonna be, eh?****

2. Robin

****Okay. I haven't gotten like, ANY REVIEWS YET, but I'm continuing this just because I like it.****

****Disclaimer: Consider it done.****

I understand.

The Team doesn't. But I do. Artemis is totally distraught right now. She's torn. I know it. She's close to crying. Her gray eyes are bigger now and full of salty water.

She's my big sister. And even though I know the Team is going to resent me for it... I have to do it.

"Artemis," I say.

She holds back a sob and looks at me. I get the strangest feeling that she can see my eyes. But that's why I wear a mask- to protect my identity. But I get the strangest feeling that she's looking through the mask.

"I understand," I say. The Team stares in shock.

She freezes.

"Robin-" she chokes.

"It's okay." I don't think it is. I mean, it's okay if Artemis lets Cheshire go. It's totally okay. Because she has a good reason. And Artemis probably loves Cheshire to death, even though they have their differences. But it's not okay at the same time because the Team's gonna be so mad. But I'm not gonna let them kick her off or make her feel guilty or whatever.

Artemis's gaze flicks back to her sister. Somehow Cheshire managed to shake the mask off her face and another girl, completely different, is underneath. With a mane of black hair and the saddest brown eyes I've ever seen.

"Alice," Cheshire breathes.

Alice? Who's Alice? I don't understand Cheshire.

Except that Cheshire isn't Cheshire anymore, but I don't know her real name.

I have a feeling that the Team is staring at us with such intensity, if they were Kryptonian lasers would be burning holes into Artemis's back. Not now, Rob. Now's not the time for jokes.

But apparently, the name means something to Artemis and she whispers back, "Kitty."

Kitty... Alice... the Cheshire Cat... Artemis... oh. Oh. That took me a full two seconds. Batman would be furious.

Artemis is lost in thought for a second. I know she's thinking of... her past.

Batman didn't have to tell me. I figured it out. So many clues, pointing in all different directions, leading me off the sides and forwards and backwards and sideways. But I had found the right path of information and everything fell into place. But it never mattered.

Not at all. Artemis wasn't who her family was.

And then Cheshire's speaking Vietnamese and I know it, because I can recognize some words. I taught myself, years ago, but I forgot. I curse myself. I should've studied-

All the words I picked up were "_I'm sorry._"

Conner's confused, because he can hear them. Conner and I are the only ones who can hear it, because he has his supervision and I'm standing so close. But M'gann's unconscious because of the poison- I checked, it's not lethal- Kaldur's confused, Zatanna's even more confused, Wally's outraged and scared and angry and he doesn't know what's going on, and... yeah.

Artemis's eyes narrow.

I don't understand the next few words she utters. So I just watch intently, looking at her face. Artemis is confused. She's confused for some reason.

The next sentences are blurs. I pick up "_Too late now_" and "_hope_" and that's all.

But I get the gist of it.

Cheshire's _apologizing _to Artemis. She's being a- a- a sister again! That's the word. She's being sisterly again and she's giving advice. I think. Why is this so hard to understand? Maybe it's because it's been so long since I've actually witnessed- since I've actually understood- the feeling of having a sibling. Because I don't have one. Wally's the closest thing I have to a brother.

Artemis freezes again. And her arrow's quivering. She can't decide. I hear Wally suck in a breath to say something.

But before he can say anything, Cheshire speaks.

"_I love you._" I can understand that. But the Team can't. They just know that the words were spoken with emotion behind them, so much emotion. But they can't tell which emotion, that's how good Cheshire is at hiding. Maybe she learned from Batman.

It's the last straw for Artemis.

She lowers the arrow. The Team lets out a cry of anguish, but all the cries blend together. I couldn't tell one scream from the other. Like a violin in a symphony, you know.

But I know that Artemis only hears Wally. Only Wally. Because she and Wally- they're- it's- ugh. Too hard to explain.

Cheshire kicks her mask into her hand.

Before she puts it on, Artemis says, "_I love you, Kitty._" And then a few more words that I don't understand.

And in that moment, I wish I had a sibling. I wish I had someone to say that to. I know that Cheshire and Artemis must feel so loved, right now. They must feel like nothing in the world matters except

for the fact that they both love each other.

I wish I had a sibling so that I could make someone else in the world that happy.

But then Cheshire leans forward and touches her lips against Artemis's forehead. Artemis doesn't jerk back.

The team gasps. I gasp. Because to imagine- the feeling they both are feeling right then- is strong enough to make Cheshire be- I darnit, I forgot Cheshire's real name.

I rack my mind. Jade. It's Jade.

Anyway, where was I? Yes. Because to imagine- the feeling that they are both feeling in that moment- is strong enough to make Cheshire become Jade again.

And then the peaceful moment is gone and Jade's Cheshire and both of them, both Jade and Cheshire, are both gone into the shadows.

Artemis turns around, her head held high, as if she's challenging the Team to ask.

But her head slumps down as she sees the Team.

I have the urge to wrap my arms around her and tell her that it's okay.

But is it?

The Team is totally distraught and they want an explanation. But Artemis doesn't want to give a planation at all. Not an explanation, not an inplanation, she just wants them to understand.

They don't.

"I trusted you," Wally spits.

Artemis breaks and she starts to cry. She's crying hard. Very hard. And she falls to her knees, her face in her hands.

Wally's hard expression softens, just for a moment. But the hardness comes back and he speeds away.

Zatanna turns to look at Artemis. "I- I" she stammers.

I know Zatanna's not going to say what she thinks, because I know her so well and Zatanna would never hurt Artemis that way.

"Come talk to me when you're ready," Zatanna finishes quietly.
"_Etativel_."

She's flying away.

"THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!" Conner screams at Artemis, spit flying from his mouth as he points down towards M'gann.

She curves inwards, still sobbing.

Something inside me snaps. "Hey-" I start at Conner, enraged that he made Artemis feel so-so- so guilty.

Before I can finish, he's gone.

Kaldur leaves, not saying a word. Because Kaldur's Kaldur, and he wouldn't know what to say. Or maybe he would know what to say, but he just wouldn't want to say it.

"Hey, it's going to be okay. Stop crying, Arty. Please," I say. It's close to pleading. I lay a hand on her shoulder.

I kind of hoped that she would lash out at me like she normally did when I called her Arty, but she doesn't even say anything. My heart sinks. It's worse than I thought.

"Come on." I pull her up and shoot across the sky with my grappling hook, swinging from rooftop to rooftop.

A few times I grunt in pain when her weight is a bit much for me to carry. But it's okay.

She tries to wipe her cheeks. But she can't stop crying.

I realize that I did have a sibling.

Artemis is my sister. My big sister.

If I'm not mistaken, a sister is someone who you love and take care of and don't want anything bad to happen to her. It all fits.

I don't even care that she's too heavy for me to carry and that my muscles will be sore for days. Because I have a sister. I have a sister._

I'll keep her safe. I'll make sure the Team isn't too harsh on her and I'll try to turn things around and make things brighter for her.

Because Artemis's my sister.

And what are brothers for?

****Robin's POV.** Duh. You probably figured that out in the first two lines or something. LOL. And next chapter will be zooming in on Kaldur, and how he feels about it. And then M'gann, and Conner, and Zatanna, and all the other good stuff. IT'S A SERIES! I've only ever written one-shots and two-shots. But it's a series! Yay! And whoa. That only took about forty-five minutes! It is pretty short... though... whatever. Please review! Please, please, please!**

****OK.** Let's try this again.**

****v****

****down...****

****v****

****down...****

****v****

****down...****

****v****

****look...****

****v****

****down...****

****v****

****down...****

****v****

****here...****

****v****

****the box****

****v****

****is right****

****v****

****here****

****v****

****and because the puppy-dog thing didn't work, let's try something else.****

****v****

****I'll give you a free unicorn that grants your every wish!

Fine Print: Beware- it's imaginary.****

****v****

****Down here.****

****v****

****The review box.****

****v****

****You've already read this much. Just an extra ten seconds?
Please?****

****V****

****Peace out.****

****Reviewer: **Hey! I reviewed! So where's my unicorn that grants my every wish? *rubs hands together hungrily***

****Me:** Sorry, lady, but you didn't read the Fine Print.**

****Reviewer:** *facepalms* Why am I so _stupid? _**

****Me:** *cheerfully* I don't know!**

3. Kaldur'ahm

****NEW CHAPTER IS UP! And thank you, SageandSky, for actually reviewing. ****_Major_**** kudos.****

****Disclaimer: I own nothing but the idea of this storyline.****

****Peace out. Hope you enjoy!****

*** * ***

><p>I am... troubled.<p>

Artemis is the sister to Cheshire, which can only make her the daughter to Sportsmaster and Huntress.

Her secret is overwhelming. I do not understand why she did not tell us previously.

Did we truly seem so... so... unworthy of knowing who her family was?

We would not have pushed her out or rejected her. But because we found out the other way...

Wally is distressed. M'gann is still recovering from her wound, but she is distraught. Conner is angry. Zatanna is understanding... and open towards Artemis. And Robin...

Robin has known all along.

He is more gentle towards Artemis. He is more... careful with her, as if she is a delicate piece of porcelain.

Artemis.

I was... in shock when Cheshire kissed Artemis's forehead lightly. The Team was in shock. I had previously understood just one word of Cheshire's and Artemis's earlier conversation: "_Kitty._" Artemis spoke that word, twice, and both times it was so... overflowing with emotion.

But Artemis... once Robin brought her back to the Cave, she has been quieter.

Wally is partly to blame, because he is the one who continues to shoot dirty glances her way, which only makes Artemis more uncomfortable.

But Robin is the only one who can reach her. He is the only one who may talk to her without earning tears and without her walking away.

I had kept my silence that night. I had calmly strode away, my emotions in check.

Was it the right thing to do?

* * *

><p>I am training. Silently. I have nothing of better purpose to do.<p>

My thoughts run through my head as I train. I place my emotion behind each move I make. The practice dummy is sorely pounded.

And then Artemis walks inside.

Her eyes are red and puffy. Her mask is slightly crooked against her face. Her uniform is rumpled, as if she has been lying down on a hard surface for a long time.

She does not notice me. Not yet.

I lower my fists and stand, watching her. I do not think she feels my gaze.

Artemis sits to rest on the nearest lounging seat, obscuring the lower half of herself from view. She leans forward and her elbows slide onto her knees.

I watch in silence.

Her shoulders shake. I do not understand what she is doing. Humans have been known to laugh with so much mirth, their shoulders shake.

Humans have also been known to weep with so much sorrow, their shoulders shake.

Following the shaking of the shoulders, Artemis begins to emit loud sobs.

I now know she is weeping.

I do not know what to do, so I stand... awkwardly... in the training room, watching Artemis weep.

It pains me to see my teammate in such distress. But Artemis... she...

If I attempted to comfort her, she would push me away. So I stand.

I can see tears rolling off her face. Artemis slides her head into

her hands and sobs rack her body.

"I-" Sniffle. "Shoulda-" Sniffle. "To- Told-" Sniffle. "Th-them-" Sniffle. "Ear-earlier." She can barely create one sentence before she begins weeping again, with even more emotion.

I slowly back away. It is not my place to gaze at someone in a moment such as this one.

I turn and walk from the room, leaving Artemis behind.

* * *

><p>It was not correct for her to hide her family past from us.<p>

It was not correct for her to lie of her family past to us.

It was not correct for her to let her family go free, even after injuring another of us.

But was it correct... if she was just attempting to be one of the Team?

To be accepted as one of us?

* * *

><p>Sorry if Kaldur's a bit OOC. I tried to fit his language in, but it might sound weird. Okay? Please review! Next chapter will probably be up in the next hour. Please, please, please just click that little button down there and review! I'll do anything! Anything! *sobs hysterically*. And I am soooooo sorry this chapter is so short. In fact, the next few chapters will be pretty short, around a thousand or less words. Sorry.

Peace out.

~rainbowunicorns459

4. M'gann

**Again, another kinda-short chapter. Eeenie, meenie, minee, moe.
**

**I choose M'gann. **

Enjoy! Peace out.

I really don't know what to say.

Artemis... who cares if she's the daughter of Sportsmaster and ex-Huntress. Who cares if she's the sister of Cheshire?

What I care about is that she didn't tell us.

After all those days I spent brushing and braiding her hair (I have the strangest feeling she never liked it), after all those days baking cookies for her to be her friend, after all those days we sat

together on my bed, laughing and talking... eating the cookies I made...

She didn't tell me!

Wait. I rack my mind. Friends are...

Friends are people who you would do anything for. Friends are people who know you better than you know yourself. Friends are people who care for you, and you care for them in return.

Best friends are people who are so close to you, you can't be separated!

I thought me and Artemis were best friends. But now... we're just friends. _Are_ we even friends anymore? It hurts me to think that me and Artemis... aren't close anymore.

Because I found out that we c_an _be separated.

I'm in the infirmary. The bolt that Cheshire shot was strong enough to make me pass out. But Red Tornado, Robin, and Black Canary all said that it wasn't a lethal wound.

I hate the infirmary.

I want to go talk to Artemis. I want to go work things out with her so we can be friends again. I want to _see_ _Artemis_.

Is that true? Is that really, _really_ _true?

I curl up. No. No, it isn't.

I'm such a coward.

I don't want to be hurt again. Not in physical terms. I don't want to be hurt again if she has another secret that she can't- _won't-_ tell us. I don't want to be pained in such ways I cry. I hate crying. I did it all the time back on Mars, when I was a White Martian and nobody liked me, but I told myself: "Here, Megan. This is a new place. A new home where you can be yourself without anybody making you cry." I told myself that on the first day of Earth.

But I have cried since landing on this planet.

I hate myself for being such a big, big coward. It's rude of me, really. And all I want is _not_ to be rude.

But I can't stop myself from knowing that I really don't want to see Artemis again. I don't want to see her because she could be hiding another thing and when that comes, it'll be like another slap in the face and our friendship will be down in the dumps again.

I push myself to the farthest corner of my bed and cower into a ball.

I can't spend my days wallowing away like this! I have to go talk to her. I have to. Because how else am I supposed to be best friends with her again?

Well... maybe we can't ever be best friends again. But I'm sure we can be friends.

Right?

So as soon as I'm able, I get out of the infirmary and speed down the hallways, searching for Artemis-

"Artemis?" I call out.

Zatanna stops me, grabbing my hand and pulling me back. I lurch.

"Zee?" I ask, confused.

"She... needs some alone time. I don't think that she's ready for you yet," Zatanna says.

What? Not _ready _for me?

"It's just- just-" Zatanna tries to voice what she's thinking. "she believes for some weird reason that we all hate her- and it's sorta true, in Superboy and Wally's terms- but me, you, and Kaldur- we don't hate her. She just doesn't understand that. Robin's the only one who can talk to her."

"But- but-" I look down the hallway and see Artemis's door. It's late afternoon, so she's bound to be in there. She only goes to her actual home late at night.

"She won't talk. You can try. But Artemis won't talk because she thinks that we all hate her. Kaldur doesn't. I don't. You don't. I'm pretty sure that Wally's angry at her, but he doesn't _hate _her. And Superboy- he's also really angry at her, but I don't think- right?" Zatanna looks at me.

I shake my head slowly. "No. No, he doesn't hate her either." Sure, he hates that she didn't tell us and that I got hurt from it- he's really sweet that way- but he doesn't hate _her. _

"She needs some alone time," Zatanna repeats.

I glance at her door.

"I've tried," Zatanna says quietly. "Robin tries to help her open up, but... she's just..."

I nod.

Zatanna casts a worried glance at me as she walks away.

But I still have to try. If Artemis is really that distraught, I should help her.

I lower myself down to the floor (**if you didn't know, she was flying earlier**) and start walking.

I reach Artemis's door and can hear muffled sobs. My heart fractures.

"Arty-" Robin's voice. I stifle a gasp at the nickname he's calling her-usually she would go nuts about that name. I wait.

Another sob. Whoa. It looks like Artemis doesn't mind Robin calling her _Arty. _

_"_Arty, they don't hate you- really- it's just- they- me- you-" Robin's struggling to form a complete sentence.

Before I can lose my confidence, I knock.

The sobs stop.

I can hear Robin walking to the door. He opens it just a crack, so he can peek through.

"Megan?" he asks.

Artemis starts breaking down in sobs behind him. My heart fractures a little more.

Robin casts a worried glance behind him and turns back around.
"Megan, what are you-"

"I'm here to talk to Artemis," I blurt.

Robin's eyes widen behind his sunglasses. "Ah- you see- she's not really ready-"

"I _need_ to talk to Artemis," I rephrase.

Robin looks behind him at Artemis. I can't see her. But Robin can.

"Arty?" he whispers.

Artemis must've nodded or something because Robin swung the door open.

My heart completely breaks.

Artemis is curled up on her bed. She's not moving, other than to blow her nose into a tissue. The trash can's full of tissues. She sniffles and tosses the tissue into the trash. It lands among the heap of used ones.

"Artemis?" I say quietly. I walk in and sit down next to her.

She turns to look at me, her eyes red from crying too hard. She waits for me to speak.

"It's not true, you know," I say.

She tilts her head in confusion. I can hear Robin slipping out of the room and gently closing the door behind him.

"I don't hate you," I say.

More tears roll out.

"I'm serious, Artemis. We're still friends." I know we are, because if we weren't friends, I wouldn't be feeling this right now. I wouldn't be doing this right now. "We'll always be friends. Okay? Don't cry. Please don't cry."

"You're- you're so- so-" she sniffs. "You're so sweet, M'gann."

I smile. "Thanks. I heard you think that everyone hates you?" I ask.

She doesn't answer. She just looks away. I'm pretty sure that if this was a normal day, she'd be so embarrassed that she was crying in front of me.

"Guess what? They don't," I say, as gently as I can.

"Do you think I should've told you earlier?" she bursts out.

I have to say the truth. It would only serve to make her more sad if I lied.

"Yes," I say, even gentler than my earlier words.

If possible, she curls up into a tighter ball.

"But no matter what, I'm always here. Because we're friends! It's what friends do." I don't know what else to say. I can't be my normal, bubbly self right here. I can't. I don't have much experience comforting people.

She doesn't answer.

I have a feeling she's thinking about what I said.

Zatanna was right. Artemis needs some alone time.

So I stand and give her a warm smile. And then I back away, out of the room.

I close the door gently behind me.

"I heard you went to talk to Artemis," Conner says as I walk back to my room.

I know where this is going. "Yes. That's true."

"Why?" he demands. "After she- she hurt you- she lied to us-"

"Because nobody deserves to be alone the way she is," I say. Whoa. That is definitely not something I would normally say.

I can tell Conner's flustered. "But she- she's not alone-"

"She's more alone than anyone on this team. And considering how alone Zatanna is, that's saying a lot." It's true, isn't it? Zatanna has nobody. Her mother died in childbirth, her father's Dr. Fate... But Zatanna at least didn't shut herself away. For that long. And at least Zatanna's trying to become less alone by bonding with each of us.

He's even more flustered. "I- I"

"Conner, I'm fine now. Artemis just didn't want to be pushed out. She wanted to be... one of us. And because she's already done her bad deed, she just has to face the consequences. She's really hurt that you're angry at her, Conner. Please. Don't hurt her even more," I whisper. And then I swing open the door and walk inside.

Conner's left standing, speechless.

I hope he'll take my advice and be more... kind towards Artemis.

Because she needs kindness right now.

******OOO. M'gann's totally OOC. I'm sorry. But I'm not good at writing from her POV and i thought that I should just get her chapter over with. And Conner's pretty OOC, too. Whoops! It's not one of my best chapters. But I'll have Zatanna's (and hopefully Conner's) chapter up by the end of the day. Okay? I'll try to fit in Conner's to make up for this sucky chapter. ******

******Please review! Peace out.******

****~rainbowunicorns459****

5. Zatanna

******Zatanna's chapter. I'll try to weave it in with M'gann's chapter as much as I can, because their two chapters meet in the middle. But I love Chaland. ******

******I also love Spitfire. Wally's chapter will probably be up soon. But remember, Conner's comes first. Okay? ******

******Enjoy! Peace out.******

* * *

><p>I don't know how to explain it.<p>

Artemis is shattered. There. That describes it perfectly.

She's shattered and she can't really fix it. Not by herself. Partly because we're the ones that shattered her in the beginning.

She needs us.

I can't help myself from shooting dirty looks at Wally when he shoots dirty looks at Artemis because he doesn't have the right to make her feel bad about herself.

I can't help myself from glaring at Conner when Conner glares at Artemis. Because Conner doesn't have the right to make her feel bad about herself.

Only Artemis has the right to make herself feel bad about herself.

But that's why I'm here. That's why I'm standing in front of her room. To tell her that she shouldn't feel bad about herself.

"Artemis?" I lay my palm against the doorway to Artemis's room.

"Who is it?"

I jump. That... wasn't Artemis's voice.

The door opens, just a crack. "Oh. It's you, Zee." Robin rubs the back of his neck awkwardly.

"I... is Artemis in there?" I ask, peeking over his shoulder.

"Well, she's sort of, well-" Robin looks over his shoulder to glance at Artemis, who no doubt is behind him.

"Can I... come in?" I ask.

"Um," Robin stammers, looking at Artemis.

She probably nodded or something, because Robin opens the door all the way and I step inside.

My hand brushes unconsciously against Robin's, and then his face is tomato-red.

He slips out of the room and closes the door.

I shrug and turn to look at Artemis.

And I have to concentrate really hard to keep my hands from flying to my mouth.

Because Artemis... isn't... well she- she-

She doesn't look like herself anymore. Her tough girl act is down. She's sitting on her bed, staring down at her lap where her hands are folded. And her eyes...

Those steely-gray eyes are no longer steely. They're wet. And they're big and helpless.

"Artemis?" I say quietly.

She doesn't look up. "Hey, Zee."

"So, um," I sit down next to her. "You want to talk?"

She doesn't answer.

"Artemis-" I start.

"Do you hate me?" she blurts.

Wow. The old Artemis is... gone. And the new Artemis, this new Artemis, is no longer as confident.

"No. No, I don't hate you," I say softly, resting my hand on top of hers.

She doesn't pull away. I don't whether to take that as a sign of welcoming, or just a sign that she's too tired to move.

"Does the Team hate me?" Her voice is so soft, almost like a whisper.

"_Hate? _No! No, the Team doesn't hate you! Where'd you get that idea?" I ask, trying to make my voice sound as incredulous as possible.

She looks at me. I have a clear view of her eyes. And I fight the urge to shudder. I never, ever want to see Artemis's eyes that way, ever again.

"The Team doesn't hate you," I repeat.

"Do you think I should've told earlier?" she asks.

"Well- um- yes-" I try to find words to put together.

"And because I didn't, you hate me," she whispers.

"Artemis." I grab her shoulders and turn her to me. "Artemis, nobody hates you. Get that idea out of your head. Okay?"

She pulls away.

Not okay, then.

"I need to be alone," she says quietly.

It's like a slap to the face. Artemis doesn't want my help. But that's okay. It's her decision who talks to her. I said my part.

She sees my face and hurriedly goes on. "It's not that you're doing something wrong, or anything, it's just-"

"I get it." I stand and move to the door. "But I'm here. If you ever want to talk to me again. Okay?"

"Okay." Her voice is shaky.

I really, really don't like the new Artemis and how scared she is. I want the old Artemis back.

I slip out the door and close it behind me.

"How'd it go?" Robin asks.

I jump. "Huh?" I turn to him. He's leaning casually against the wall.

"How'd it go?" Robin repeats.

"Oh. She, um," I say. I don't know what to say, so I just gesture to the door.

"She kicked you out," Robin guessed.

My shoulders sagged. "Yes. To put it in blunt terms, yes, she kicked me out."

"Hey, it's okay. She's just not ready yet," Robin says, laying a hand on my shoulder.

"Ready for what?"

"Ready to talk."

"Oh. Okay."

"Come back in two days. She should be better by then," he says.

I try to give him a smile. "I will. Thanks."

He grins. And then I walk and leave, down the hallway.

* * *

><p>I walk for a few minutes, and then I see M'gann.<p>

She must've escaped the infirmary, because she's flying as fast as she can towards Artemis's room. "Artemis?" she calls.

I grab her hand and pull her down.

"Zee?" she asks, puzzled.

Well... um... "M'gann, she needs some alone time." What next... "I don't think she's ready for you yet."

Her face flashes confusion. "Not... ready?"

"It's just- it's just-" I'm wrestling words from my own mouth. "She believes for some reason that we all hate her."

M'gann's face is even more confused.

"It's sorta true in Wally's and Superboy's terms, but me, you, and Kaldur- we don't hate her."

Did I say the right thing? No time for thinking. Gotta keep talking.

"She just doesn't understand that. Robin's the only one who can- actually- talk to her."

"But-but-" M'gann doesn't understand.

"She won't talk. At least, she won't open up. You can try. But Artemis won't talk because she thinks we all hate her. Kaldur doesn't. I don't. You don't. I'm pretty sure that Wally's angry at her, but he doesn't hate her. And Superboy- he doesn't really hate her, right?" I say.

"No. He doesn't hate her either," M'gann says. I hope she's telling the truth.

"She needs some alone time," I say quietly.

I look wistfully at Artemis's door.

"I've tried. Robin tries to help her to open up- but-"

She nods.

I look at her, half in worry, half in confusion. Is she really going to try it?

I walk away.

But when I look behind me, she's walking down the hallway.

It's okay. I gave her a fair warning. Hopefully she won't be too crushed. But M'gann's closer to Artemis than I am. They've known each other longer. And I've seen how close they are, braiding each other's hair and baking cookies together.

* * *

><p>Artemis... she was just trying to be one of us. That's why she kept it hidden. Because she didn't want us to lash out at her and push her out of the family she's always wanted.<p>

I forgive her for that. I mean, who wouldn't? Well, Wally and Superboy wouldn't, but that's a whole other chapter.

The least I can do is try to help them see that Artemis doesn't really need their antics.

So I head to Wally's room.

This is going to be hard.

* * *

><p>And... back again! I hope you enjoyed. But Zatanna... she's tricky to right from. And FYI, her dad's already Dr. Fate.

So I'll probably have a chapter up with Conner in it. Who's left? Ah, Wally. So Conner and Wally, and then maybe I'll switch back to Artemis or Robin. And then we'll have the big finale.

Okay?

Please review!

Peace out.

~rainbowunicorns459

6. Conner

**Conner's chapter. **

****Disclaimer: consider it disclaimed.****

* * *

><p>I pound the wall in frustration, making a big dent.<p>

M'gann doesn't understand. Zatanna doesn't understand. Kaldur doesn't understand. Robin doesn't understand.

But me and Wally do.

Artemis lied to us. She hurt us. She probably infiltrated us. For all we know, she could be passing information to Cheshire and Sportsmaster this very minute!

BECAUSE SHE'S CHESHIRE'S SISTER!

She is just playacting when she cries all the time, or when she's always nervous, and she isn't really crying or being nervous, and she isn't really crying to herself and whispering, "I'm such an idiot" over and over.

Right?

Right.

Because I'm in the room right next to her, and I can hear everything she does.

She's not our friend anymore.

Anymore? She was never our friend to begin with!

Then why had I thought...

Never mind that. Artemis is a liar, a cheater, and she fooled us all.

I can't believe that the others are falling for her act.

Because it's totally fake.

Right?

Right.

* * *

><p>"Arty," Robin says.<p>

My eyes widen at the name. I'm sure that Artemis will do something horrible to Robin because of the nickname.

Instead, she just sobs.

"Arty, they don't hate you. They really don't," Robin continues.

What was this?

"I'm such an idiot- I should just leave-"

My eyes widen. She couldn't- she wouldn't-

What am I thinking? Of course she should leave the team! And if she wants to, I'm sure not going to stop her!

"No! Artemis, don't you dare leave this team. Because we need you. Wally's too stubborn to admit it, and so is Conner. But we all need you on this team," Robin said.

Artemis sobs.

This is so unlike Artemis. But she's been like this for a few days now.

I continue to listen, and I think Robin knows I am.

"Nobody hates you. I don't know where you got that idea. M'gann and me and Kaldur and Zatanna have already told you that."

"But Conner-"

"Conner doesn't. I'm sure he's going to apologize for being such a _jerk_ about it soon," Robin says, raising his voice at the word _jerk._

My eyes narrow.

"And Wally- he-" Artemis can't finish.

It's obvious the attraction between the two. But both of them won't admit it and both of them fear what the other thinks of them, but both of them are just too _chicken _to actually talk about it with each other.

"He doesn't hate you! God, Artemis, you're beating yourself up for nothing. I want you to make me a promise," Robin says.

I can hear the rustling of hair, because Artemis looks up.

"A promise? I- I can't-"

"After everything I've done for you, you can't make me a promise," Robin says, his voice cold.

I'm sure that Robin doesn't mean what he says. He's saying it for Artemis's benefit.

I can hear eyelashes rustling because Artemis's eyes widen.

"No- Robin-"

"Just make me this promise. Okay?" Robin's voice is gentler now.

More hair rustling. Artemis just nodded.

"I never want you to say the words_ hate me _in a sentence. Unless

the word _don't _is put right in front of it."

Robin's a very clever boy.

"But-"

"_Artemis_." Robin's voice is hard and unyielding again. I think he learned it from Batman.

"Okay," Artemis whispers.

And then there's a loud rustling and I think that Artemis just threw her arms around Robin's neck.

"Hey, shh, it's okay, Arty," Robin soothes, his voice soft again, and he's rubbing comforting circles into her back. She breaks down into sobs.

I've never heard this exchange before. I've never actually heard Robin and Artemis talk like this before.

It's like they're... brother and sister.

But realization kicks in.

If Robin, the Boy Wonder, probably the greatest detective ever only second to Batman, thinks that Artemis is telling the truth- that she never meant for Cheshire to hurt M'gann, that she never meant to hurt us by lying, that she only wanted to fit in with us...

then I should, too.

Right?

Right.

* * *

><p>Sorry it's so short.

**But I'll have Wally's up, probably by the end of today. **

And then Robin again, and then Artemis, and then the finale.

Yay! I've got it all planned out. **So I hope you enjoyed! Peace out.**

~rainbowunicorns459

PS. Guess what? There are soooo many views for this thing. Not as many as other stories, but enough for me. **So why aren't you guys reviewing? Hmmm... :-/**

Anyway, peace out.

* * *

><p>But just to brighten up your day, here's a really cheesy joke that I just made up (because that's the kind of crazy person I

am). ;)

"**"I would like to thank my arms for always being at my side, my legs for supporting me, and my fingers, because I can always count on them."**

"**INNER VOICE: If anyone asks, I don't know you. **

* * *

><p>Peace out. Again.

7. Wally

**'Sup! I'm back! And this is Wally's chapter. **

Love Spitfire. FYI Wally doesn't really live at the Cave. He just has a room there, you know, to keep food and other stuff. He's in there right now.

Tell me if you think he's OOC. Peace out!

Disclaimer: It has been disclaimed.

I hate her.

Let me go into more detail.

I hate, hate, hate, hate, hate, her.

Reason for hate number one: she lied to us. She's the sister of CHESHIRE! The evil murderer who kills people in their beds!

Reason for hate number two: SHE LET CHESHIRE GO! After Cheshire hurt M'gann, after Cheshire killed all those people- I really don't want to start ranting, so let's move on.

Reason for hate number three: CHESHIRE FREAKING KISSED HER FOREHEAD AND SHE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT!

Reason for hate number four: ROBIN KNEW! Rob. My best friend. HE KNEW! And he didn't tell me, which means that he _does_ have secrets that I don't know about! And now I'm really mad at Rob, and I hate Artemis because _nobody_, _ever_, _makes me dislike Rob._

Reason for hate number five: Whenever she cries, she makes me curse myself. I don't know why. Maybe it's because I hate seeing her cry... no. It's because, for some weird reason, she cursed me with black magic so that I curse myself! She's a witch! (No offense, Zee. A witch, in terms of black magic.)

So yeah. Five very clear reasons of why I hate Artemis Crock.

I'm still figuring out number five.

Artemis... used to be our friend. Actually...

She was _never_ our friend! Never! Because friends don't lie to each other and friends don't let murderers that hurt other friends leave,

unharmed!

Conner and I are the only ones that see her for who she is. She's a fraud! A fake! A liar! A cheat! And she's probably working alongside Cheshire to murder innocent people in their beds!

Megan's like: "Oh, she really didn't want to lie to us- she just wanted to be our _friend_."

And Kaldur's like: "I do not believe that Artemis truly lied to us from her heart. She lied from her mouth, because she _wanted_ to inform us."

And Robin's like: "Give her a break, dude! She's been through much worse than all of us!" And I really don't think that's true, considering Dick's past.

And Artemis's like: "... Well, Artemis isn't really... she... she doesn't really say anything and most of the time, she's crying. But it's playacting! And I certainly do not curse myself for making her cry every night! No, sir! Or ma'am. If you're a ma'am, that is.

But _all_ of them don't believe that Artemis is a _fraud_, _fake_, _liar_, and _cheat_!

Just to prove my point, I glare and shoot dirty looks at her.

For some reason, she doesn't shoot dirty looks back. And sometimes I want her to. But I don't know why.

Well, maybe I do know why. Because I'd much rather see the old Artemis, tough and full of spirit (you know, the right kind of _spirit_), than this Artemis, soft and full of tears.

Nope! That's not the reason! No, sir. Or ma'am.

And Rob's been leaving me messages at my window (cause that's the creepy stalker he is).

Here's what they look like:

Artemis cries every day, every minute, every second because of what you and Conner do to her.

She thinks that you hate her.

She has nightmares. Bad ones. And I don't think I need to explain what they're about.

She hates herself.

She doesn't think she's worth anything.

She's depressed. It's only a matter of time before she starts cutting. SO STOP BEING SO RUDE AND MEAN TO HER!

I don't keep these notes by my bed, looking at them throughout the night.

They don't mean anything to me. I certainly _don't_ start crying when

I read the first note, thinking that I make Artemis cry.

I certainly don't curse myself when I read the second note.

And I don't lie awake all night, hoping I don't have nightmares about me making Artemis have nightmares.

The fourth note has nothing to do with the fact that my eyes are always red and puffy. I hope nobody notices.

And the fifth note- it's not worth anything to me. I don't keep the little piece of paper, clutched to my chest every night, thinking about how horrible of a person I am.

But the sixth note. God, that sixth note. I have to admit- it does have a tiny bit of an impact on me, when I know that because of me, and my stupid bullying, I'm making Artemis depressed.

And I hope with all my might that she doesn't start cutting.

I won't deny that.

And it's not because I have a... special... feeling for Artemis. It's because I don't like seeing people cut themselves open. Especially because of me.

That's right. Yes, sir. Or ma'am.

And Rob... we used to be so close. And now, we're like distant friends. Still friends, but distant. And he's drifting away, every second of the day. Hey! That rhymes! Whatever. Now's not the time for rhyming, Wall-man.

But Robin's spending all his time with Artemis. It's like they're brother and sister or something!

Rob and I used to be brothers.

Used to.

And I would do a lot of things to make us brothers again.

Not anything. A lot of things.

"Wally. I need to come in."

Zatanna? What's she doing? She should be... I don't know... at her house or something! Oh. Yeah, she lives here. But it's afternoon! Nobody should be coming into my room in the middle of the day, because they should be training.

When I didn't answer, the door opened and shut behind her.

She's wearing a red tank-top and white capris and black flats.

A while ago, she used to shut herself away in her room, alone and crying, and she wore nothing but baggy sweatpants and over-sized T-shirts. But after that two-week marker of Zatara's changing, she was suddenly bright and cheerful again. (**and if you've read my other story- There to Stay- you'll know what I'm talking about.

:)**

I used to wonder all the time about that.

But now I wonder all the time about Art-

No. That's wrong. Erase that from your brains, people!

"Wally. We need to talk," Zatanna says.

"Aren't we doing that right now?" I crack a smile. I'm sitting on my bed in a relaxed position, feet crossed and the ankles, arms behind my head. "So wassup?"

"Wally," Zatanna says again, sitting down on the edge of my bed. "It's about Artemis."

Suddenly I'm not relaxed anymore. "What?"

"Artemis," Zatanna repeats. "It's about her."

I don't answer.

"She's depressed, Wally."

I jolt up in bed. "What?"

I know she's depressed. Robin told me, via note. But hearing it from someone's mouth... it means that she's actually depressed. Like, seriously depressed.

"You don't know?" Zatanna sighs. "The signs are clear. She's feeling sadness. Hopelessness. And she's always tearful and frequently crying, and she's withdrawn from friends and even her own mother, she's not even cleaning her bow anymore, and you know how much she loved that bow, her mother even said that she hasn't been eating and she's not sleeping at night, she has too many feelings of worthlessness and guilt, she's got no more enthusiasm and she's not herself anymore-"

"Okay! Okay! I get it!" I say.

"No, Wally. You don't get it. She's depressed. Really depressed. Miss M. and Martian Manhunter can't be within twenty feet of her, that's how strong her feelings of worthlessness are. And you know what can happen if you're depressed for too long." Zatanna's voice is sad, distant. Unlike her.

"No." I sit up. "No!"

"Yes, Wally," Zatanna says sadly. She pauses.

"And it's because of you."

The realization hits and suddenly I'm sobbing and crying and I've finally realized it: I'm hurting Artemis way more than I have any right to. She could- if she doesn't get happy enough- she could- she could-

Zatanna wraps her arms around me until I stop crying. And the feeling

of it- the feeling of someone just hugging me until I'm right again- makes me feel good.

She draws back. "Wally, you need to do something-

"-or she'll commit suicide. Yeah." The words spill from my tongue.

She recoils. "No! No, no, no. Is that- no. She's thinking of leaving the Team! You thought- no," Zatanna says hurriedly.

My muscles relax, just the tiniest bit. I misunderstood it.

"Wait, what?" She's thinking of leaving the Team? It's not as drastic... but it still hurts.

"But you're right, Wally. She could commit suicide, if we allow her to quit the Team. And by shooting her all those dirty glances, all those arrogant looks- she's going to quit the Team."

She pauses.

"Wally, you have to make her see that she's not useless. That you don't hate her. That the world isn't turned against her," Zatanna says.

"But how?" I bring my knees up to my chest.

"Tomorrow she's announcing that she's thinking of leaving the Team," Zatanna tells me.

I look at her.

"Robin told me, okay?" She's frustrated.

I hide a smile. Those two are closer than they appear to be.

"Robin also told me to tell you that's your chance. To tell her that you're sorry and all that other stuff. And don't you dare back out of it," she says, her eyes blazing. She thrusts her face up close to mine. "Because if you don't talk to her tomorrow, then she's going to leave."

Huh? Me?

"One more thing- Robin told me that she would leave the Team straight away, if you weren't here. So don't you dare chicken out of talking tomorrow. Because if you do... I'll personally make sure that you'll never, ever sleep at night." She leans back, her little bout of fury gone. "That is, if you can sleep at night at all, knowing that you hurt her that bad."

Her words freeze my heart. Not the threat. Because Zatanna's right- if I chicken out of talking tomorrow, then she's gonna leave.

I know that I have to talk to Artemis tomorrow.

Zatanna gets off my bed and walks to the door. "Don't you dare," she hisses again, and then she's gone, the door swinging gently on its hinges.

Too shocked even to use my speed, I get up and close the door behind her.

My jaw sets. I have to convince Artemis not to leave the Team.

I have to.

**Well, then! Wally's chapter. Next will be Robin's again, and then it'll be Artemis, and then we'll have the finale (the big day that Zatanna was talking about) where it all goes back to right again. I think. **

And please read my other story. It's called "There to Stay" and it's Chalant. Because that story was my first-ever story and I really need feedback on it. Thanks! Peace out.

And if you didn't know, your reviews make my day. So please, please, please tell me what you think of this chapter!

~rainbowunicorns459

8. Robin (part two)

Robin's chapter. Because I felt I need to do it.

Disclaimer: These characters do not belong to me. Just the idea for this story does.

* * *

><p>My face is pure rage as I scribble furiously into the paper. I pause and look back down at the sheet.<p>

I scribbled another sentence on the paper and then hold it up to the light, examining the words written on it.

It's the sixth one.

I jump out the window and catch myself with a smooth handspring. And then I'm running down the street, feet pounding. I have to get these emotions out of my head. It's about a half-hour run.

Some people shoot me strange looks, wondering what the Boy Wonder is doing. I fight the urge to sigh.

I use my grappling hook to swing myself up to the closest roof and then I'm running furiously again, jumping through the gaps between rooftops. The paper is clutched in my fist.

I need to run right now. And I have a destination.

To those on the ground, it seems like I've disappeared into the darkness. Which is good. Because I want no followers.

I make my way to Wally's house. I see it, bricks and all. Wally's light is off. I can see him moving around in his window.

I run faster. Bruce is probably wondering where I am.

I reach the house and crouch underneath Wally's window. And then I'm swarming up the wall, grabbing onto loose bricks.

Wally's going to bed now. Good.

I slap the note down onto the white windowsill.

Thinking for a moment, I let loose a warm breath.

The warm fog sticks to the glass of the window. I carefully inscribe one word into the fog, being careful to write it backwards so that Wally will understand.

Dude.

And then I knock on the glass. I drop down onto the ground again, catching myself with another handspring. I run.

Wally gets out of bed to walk to the window. He reads the word that I've written on the window. And then he reads the note.

His eyes bug out and he covers his mouth with his right hand. I'm pretty sure he's trying hard not to scream.

His hand doesn't lower as he looks out the window and meets my eyes.

I'm on the opposite side of the street, but I'm sure he can see me perfectly.

My eyes narrow. And I shoot my dirtiest batglare I can muster at him.

And then I use my grappling hook to swing up on the nearest roof and I'm running again, back to Wayne Manor, using the shadows to conceal my route.

I sincerely hope that Wally is taking my notes seriously. Because they're serious.

* * *

><p>Artemis is depressed.<p>

The signs are clear. She's getting worse every day.

I've tried explaining it to Bruce.

He just tells me, "Change Wally."

And then it hits me. All Artemis ever talks about is Wally hating her. So I'm trying to get Wally to realize that he's hurting Artemis way more than he has any right to.

I've been leaving notes. And every note I leave is truthful and from my heart.

The sixth note- the one that I just left:

She's depressed. It's only a matter of time before she starts cutting. SO STOP BEING SO RUDE AND MEAN TO HER!

I hope he understands. Because Artemis is depending on it.

* * *

><p>"She's not talking to me anymore," says Paula.<p>

My eyes widen.

"Robin, you must help her. She needs you," Paula says, her voice desperate. "You're the only one."

I'm at Artemis's house, talking to her mother. I need to know. Because even though all the other signs are there, I need to know if Artemis is pushing away her family.

She is.

"Jade would help, if she were here," Paula whispers.

My eyes widen even more.

Wow, Artemis and Jade are really close. Even though one's a hero and the other's a villain, they're still close enough so that their mom thinks that one could talk the other out of depression.

"But she doesn't know that Artemis is suffering like this," she finishes.

"Don't worry, Miss Nguyen," I say, hopping out the window and onto my R-motorbike and driving towards the Cave.

I want someone to tell me that.

* * *

><p>I'm back at the Cave after talking to Artemis's mom.<p>

So I run straight to Artemis's room. She always hates it when I'm not there. She's dependent on me now. I'm not sure I like it, because the old Artemis would never depend on anyone, but she needs me or she'll break down.

Not breaking down in terms of crying.

"Arty? I'm here," I say, walking straight in. I close the door behind me.

"Robin!" she exhales.

"So anything new happen?" I ask casually, sitting down beside her. She's always on her bed. Always.

"I'm thinking of quitting the Team," she blurts.

My eyes widen. I'm doing a lot of eye-widening today. "WHAT?" I burst.

"Well-nobody really likes me, and it's just you- I'm thinking of quitting the Team, Robin," she says, meeting my eyes.

Oh, no. She's separating herself from us. She's already separated herself from her mother, and now this? It's the first step- I know it- if we allow her to leave, she's going to commit-

I'm not gonna say it.

"Artemis-" I try.

"I'm announcing it tomorrow," Artemis says softly.

"I-" I choke down an emotion that even I don't recognize. "I have to go."

I run out of the room, feeling bad that I had to leave her like that, but this is for the greater good.

I dash down the hallway, I have to go faster- Zatanna-

"Zatanna!" I call.

I crash into something and we both tumble to the ground. I manage to twist myself so that I fall first, hitting the ground so she doesn't. It's the gentlemanly thing to do.

"Robin!" she exclaims.

She's lying on top of me. And I'm lying underneath her. I blush bright red.

Zatanna hurriedly gets off me, helping me up. "What is it?" she asks.

The seriousness of the situation comes to mind and my blush fades. "Artemis- she- she's thinking of quitting the Team," I say.

Her hands fly to her mouth. "No..." she whispers.

"Yeah," I say.

"It's because of Wally, isn't it," Zatanna whispers.

"It's the first step. She's not talking to her mother. You have to tell him, Zee. He won't listen to me. But you have to tell him that it's all his fault that Artemis is gonna leave-" My shoulders shake. I hold back a sob.

"I will." She lays a hand on my shoulder. "Don't worry. I will make him listen to me, whether he likes it or not."

And that's the thing I love about Zee- she's determined and brave and she won't let anything get in her way. She's loyal, too, and she's understanding. She knows that if Artemis leaves, she'll truly think that she's worthless and then she'll- she'll-

I'm not gonna say it.

"She's announcing it tomorrow. You have to tell him-" I say again.

"Don't worry! Everything will turn out fine. And Wally is going to make Artemis stay on this team. Okay?" she says, making me look up at her.

"Okay," I whisper.

She gives me a comforting smile. "I'm actually headed that way right now." She smiles again. "Don't worry. Everything will turn out perfect."

And then she's walking off to Wally's room.

* * *

><p>Everything depends on this talk that Zatanna's about to have with Wally.<p>

If Zatanna doesn't convince Wally that Wally's hurting Artemis way too much than she deserves, then tomorrow Artemis will announce she's leaving. And Wally will be the only one who could possibly stop her, so he needs to speak up. And if he doesn't speak up at that meeting, Artemis will leave and then she'll- she'll-

commit suicide.

* * *

><p>That chapter's a bit dark. I don't like writing dark things. So I'm practically typing as fast as I can, trying to get this chapter over with. The next chapter will be dark too, so warnings. And then it'll be all bright and happy again! Yay!

**Okay, then. Review please! Peace out.
**

~rainbowunicorns459

9. Artemis (part two)

**Artemis, again. Because I need to get her feelings out. And I couldn't resist throwing Cheshire in there. **

Disclaimer: It's been disclaimed.

* * *

><p>"I'm thinking of quitting the Team," I blurt.<p>

"WHAT?" he nearly shouts.

"Well everyone ha-" I stop for just a second. "-nobody really likes me and it's just you- I'm thinking of quitting the Team, Robin."

His face is a mixture of agony and confusion and denial.

"Artemis-" he starts.

"I'm announcing it tomorrow," I say.

"I-" he chokes a little bit.

I wait expectantly.

"I have to go." And then he's dashing out of the room.

My eyes widen.

Never before as Robin... just... left me like that!

But it's okay. He deserves to be mad, or sad, or confused, or whatever he's thinking right now. Because it's a really selfish thing I'm doing, quitting the Team. And after all he's done for me- yeah. He deserves to leave.

I don't deserve to have him for a brother.

And I definitely don't deserve to be on this team.

So that's why I'm leaving. And then- once I've separated myself from all of them- I can finally go my own way.

I don't even want to know what 'my own way' is gonna be.

"Alice!"

I jump up. That voice...

"Alice?"

Slowly, I stand and turn around. Because I know that voice.

Cheshire.

She's sitting on my windowsill, her mask off.

I scramble backwards. "Cheshire?" I whisper. I look around. "What are you doing here?"

"Mom called me," Jade says. "She said that you're depressed."

I look at her. "No! I'm not depressed!" I exclaim.

My eyes probably said the truth, because Jade sighs.

"Alice, I'm so, so, so sorry that I made you go through this. And I don't want you, ever, to feel this way," Jade says.

This is so _Jade_.

"And I just wanted to say: I love you. I really, really do and you're not alone in this. Nobody hates you," Jade says softly.

I throw myself into her arms and I'm sobbing all over again- and it's like when I was eight and when she was ten-

"Shh, it's alright, Alice. But I can't stay long. You have to be strong. I love you," Jade whispers.

I look up at her. "Kitty? Please stay." I need her to stay. Because she always knows the right thing to say to me when I'm scared or lonely or just depressed.

"Sorry, kiddo. But I can't stay long," she murmurs into my hair. And she's braiding it like she used to.

There's a moment of silence.

"Artemis," she bends down to look me in the eyes, her hands on my shoulders. "You've found yourself a good family."

"What?"

"Your brother- he's really sweet. I've been watching him. He'll do anything to make you happy. And the Martian- she's really sweet too. I've been watching the magician- she's a fierce little thing. And the redhead..."

Jade gives me a sly look.

"What?" I ask. But I know what she's getting at and I'm blushing furiously.

"You know what..." Jade says slyly again, smirking.

I roll my eyes but I can tell she can see through me.
"_Jade_"

"Fine. But just promise me that you won't leave the team," she says, serious again.

I can't. I can't.

She understands.

"Alice." She tilts my chin up to look me in the eye. "Alice."

"I'll try- but if Wally doesn't- if he doesn't stop me-"

She understands. I know she does.

"Don't worry. He'll stop you," Jade says. "Now, I have to go. Be strong, Alice."

"Bye, Kitty," I say softly. And she's gone.

I turn and walk back to my bed, lying down.

I don't know.

I just don't know.

* * *

><p>I am soooooooooo sorry that it's so short. This was one of

my sucky chapters. But at least I wrote!

****The next one will be up probably tomorrow afternoon, because my spring break is over. :(****

****Thanks! Please review!****

****~rainbowunicorns459****

10. Wally (Part two)

****I couldn't resist throwing this chapter in. ****

****Disclaimer: *sighs* I do not own any of these fantabulous characters. Not one. *sighs*****

*** * ***

><p>"Flash Boy."<p>

"Mini Flash."

"Flash Kid."

I stir and groan, rubbing my eyes. I'm at my house and the covers are thrown off. It all comes rushing back- I had a nightmare sometime in the middle of the night and woke up, panting. But I remember that I fell asleep before I could actually be scared. But I'm cold now.

"Redhead. Whatever your name is. Wake up."

My blood runs cold and I freeze. I'm pretty sure that there's a ridiculous, shocked expression on my face.

That voice...

That ridiculous expression still plastered onto my face, I turn to the window.

Cheshire.

She's leaning against my windowsill, seconds away from falling and dropping out of the window. But right before she does, she catches herself.

She's wearing her red and white mask with her green clothing and her mane is totally frazzled.

My eyes narrow.

"It's _Kid Flash,_" I say, venom laced in my voice. "And get out before I-"

"Save it, Flash Boy. I'm here about Artemis," she says, pulling a dart out of her pocket and examining it as someone would their nails.

My eyes widen. "What?"

"Artemis. Artemis Crock. The blonde? The one that you've been depressing lately? My sister?" Cheshire spits, turning her gaze from the dart to me. Her eyes are smoldering. But her eyes turn back to the dart after a second.

"What about her?" I ask suspiciously, trying to keep the quaver out of my voice. Those eyes were so... familiar...

"She's quitting the Team tomorrow. You didn't know that? I thought that the magician told you."

"I know that. But she's not going to quit," I say, raising my chin.

Her piercing brown eyes turn to look through my green ones. "What makes you say that?"

And then I place it- those eyes are just like Artemis's! Not the same color, obviously, but they have the same emotion behind them.

Probably because they grew up together.

Well, Jade grew up with Artemis but Artemis didn't grow up with Jade.

The thing is, my heart pulls painfully because I remember that Artemis's eyes aren't like that anymore.

"I won't let her." My voice is defiant.

"That's right. You won't," Cheshire says, and she's leaning towards me, her brown eyes boring holes into mine.

I gulp.

"Because if you do," she turns back to her dart but the malice is still behind her voice. "If you do, then I will personally make sure that you'll never live to tell the tale."

"What-" I start.

"Listen to me, redhead. If Artemis comes to tell me that she's quit your team, I will haunt you day and night for the rest of your life. I promise. So don't do it," Cheshire hisses, her gaze whipping to me. She drops the dart back inside her pocket.

My eyes widen. Artemis and Cheshire are even closer than I thought.

"I never break a promise," Cheshire says.

And I don't know if she really does say it, because it's so soft, but I think (remember I said that I think, not know) that she looks down at her hands and whispers, "Not since I left her."

But the moment is gone and she looks back up at me.

"Don't you dare let her leave that team," Cheshire spits.

I get one last glimpse at those eyes. Those eyes that are almost twins to Artemis's.

And then her mask is back on and she's vaulted easily off my windowsill.

I jump up and run to the window just in time to see Cheshire disappear down the alley across my street.

I gently close the window, sliding it down with a soft _thump. _

I settle myself back into bed and pull the covers around me.

I try to sleep, but I can't. I don't get any more sleep.

Because her words are ringing over and over and over in my head, "_I will haunt you day and night for the rest of your life._"

It's not the threat that worries me.

It's the fact that I might not be able to live with myself if Artemis leaves. So Cheshire won't really have anyone to haunt if I'm just an empty shell.

* * *

><p>Tomorrow is probably the most important day of my life.<p>

It's the most important day of Artemis's life.

But Artemis...

she _is _my life.

* * *

><p>Fluff. Fluff, fluff, fluff, and it's soooooo short. Sorry.

Review!

~rainbowunicorns459

PS. if you're reading this, then you have the time to review. It makes me soooooooooooooooooo happy to read your reviews and I'm constantly checking them, and it would make my day even if you only wrote one word.

11. The Grand Finale

**Final chapter, everyone. This is in normal POV. But most of it is centered on Artemis. **

**I really put my heart into this fic, so please review. **

It's the grand finale!

**Disclaimer: I like peanut butter. *chuckles* No, that's not the

disclaimer. I don't own any of these characters.**

* * *

><p>Everyone's worried.<p>

Robin's trying to exercise the feeling off, sweating in gallons on his trapeze. And Bruce Wayne is worried about how distracted his son is.

Kaldur's just sitting on the couch, head in his hands.

Zatanna's curled up on her bed, her eyes glued to a book that she isn't really reading.

Conner's running his hands through his hair, trying to sort out his conflicting emotions.

M'gann is praying to all of the Earth gods and goddesses, and that includes the Greek ones and Roman ones and all the others. She's praying to the Martian God, too.

Wally's pacing back and forth in his room, trying to make up things to say to Artemis when the moment comes as fast as possible.

Artemis is asleep. But she's having a nightmare that Wally won't say anything to her before she leaves.

Jade's biting her perfect, glossy nails that she swore years ago never to bite, watching it all from the camera she planted.

So yeah. Everyone's worried.

* * *

><p>Artemis smooths back her hair and fixes her mask.<p>

This might be the last time ever she'll wear this uniform.

So she holds her head up high and gets ready to walk out of the door, knowing that the entire Team is waiting for her in the lounge.

She spots her reflection in the small mirror she has and hurriedly smooths out the crinkles in her shirt.

Okay. She rolls her shoulders back and holds up the mirror.

She's ready. But there's one more thing she has to do before she goes out there.

She looks at her face. It's scared and lonely and worried.

Artemis closes her eyes and concentrates. When she opens them, her face is void from any emotion.

Then she narrows her eyes and watches her own fearful gray orbs.

She focuses.

They change from frightened to stern and strict and now her face is a

complete mask.

They can't read her emotions anymore.

Not anymore. If she's going out, she's going to go out with a _bang_. And she's going to go out being the _old_ Artemis.

The one who knows how to fight.

She strides from the room and down the hallway where she can hear the Team talking in hushed whispers.

* * *

><p>"Artemis!" Robin cries as she walks in.<p>

She gives him a small smile before becoming herself again.

Robin's sort of proud that she managed to pull herself together and put her mask back on.

But he's sort of disappointed that she's shut them all out again.

But that's what this meeting's for. It's to let them know.

He takes a deep breath. His sister is depending on this. On Wally.

* * *

><p>Kaldur breathes in slowly. He had heard that it can help ease the mind.<p>

Artemis is back to herself again. She is now in complete control over what her face says.

But he might never see her face again after this.

So he takes another deep breath.

Artemis is depending on this.

On Kid Flash.

* * *

><p>M'gann grins at Artemis as she walks in.<p>

Artemis doesn't really return the grin- instead, she allows a small smile to break through at M'gann, and then another small smile at Robin.

M'gann tries to relax.

She looks down at her palms, which are resting on the armrests of the armchair she's sitting in.

She stifles a gasp when she realizes she's white.

Oh. She's just turned Caucasian.

She looks back up at Artemis, who's just as tense as she is. But the only way M'gann can tell that is because of the emotions rolling off Artemis's back.

She tries to relax herself and her skin morphs back to green.

But she can't really relax herself. Because her best friend is relying on this.

On Wally.

* * *

><p>Zatanna shoots a glare at Wally, but he doesn't notice.<p>

She studies him.

His legs are tapping the floor at an impossible speed. Impossible for her, maybe, but not impossible for him.

His eyes are darting around, anywhere but faces, and his feet begin tapping faster.

At least he's showing some emotion than just plain, simple calm. Because he should be nervous.

Artemis is depending on him.

* * *

><p>Conner refrains from shoving his hand through his hair. It's become a habit of his.<p>

He soaks in the sight of Artemis, because he might never see her again after this day. It's partly his fault, but mostly Wally's.

So he turns to shoot a dirty glare at him.

Wally's too jittery from what Conner hoped was nervousness to even notice the glare.

Conner narrows his eyes. Kid Flash is going to fix this.

Artemis is depending on it.

* * *

><p>Wally can't stop tapping his foot against the floor.<p>

He's vaguely aware that both Conner and Zatanna are looking at him in not-so-friendly ways. But he doesn't care. He's too nervous to care.

He has to get this right. He has to say the right thing.

He has it all planned out in his head- first, apologize. Then, apologize again. If she's still angry or sad or whatever, apologize even more and say what a big jerk he was.

Sure, it isn't a great plan, but it's the only one he has.

He repeats the steps over and over in his mind. He has to get this right.

Artemis is counting on it.

* * *

><p>"I've called this meeting to tell you that I'm going to quit the team. Unless any of you can convince me not to, that is. I'll deposit my uniform here, because I'll have no further use for it," Artemis says.<p>

They're silent.

"And I'll remove my data from the zeta beam, because I won't be needing that anymore. And I'll move my extra stuff out of my room, so that that room can have something worthy-" her breath catches- "of putting inside of it."

Out of the corner of her eye, she can see Robin frown. Because Robin hates it when she puts herself down.

But she barrels on. "I just wanted to say goodbye," she finishes.

"Why are you leaving?" M'gann and Zatanna ask at the same time.

"Because I'm not worth anything here-" she starts.

"That's wrong," Wally stands.

Her heart leaps, but she barely remembers to keep her eyes from shining.

"What is?" she keeps her voice smooth.

"You're worth everything here," Wally says.

"I'm a liar," Artemis states. Not a question. Just a statement. A declaration.

"But as Aqualad said, you're not a liar from the heart. You're a liar from your mouth because in your heart, you wanted to tell us," he says. Okay, that wasn't part of the plan. But that's okay. He crumples up the plan in his head and tosses it in the _Wally's-not-so-great ideas _trash can.

Kaldur gave an approving glance at his direction. So did Robin.

"I'm the daughter of Sportsmaster, a vicious killing _machine_," she spits, laying it heavy on the last word.

Wally just looks at her with those green eyes that she loves- no! It's _likes. _Yeah. That's what she means.

"And the sister to Cheshire, the villain that every villain keeps as their role model," Artemis continues.

Robin's frown deepens.

"And my mom's an ex. She used to be Huntress-" she tries to go on.

"That's it! She used to be a criminal! But she stopped. She took the right path. So did you! You aren't your family, Artemis," Wally says.

Artemis just stares at him.

"Your mother, Paula Nguyen-Crock, is a very smart lady. She stopped being a criminal because she loved you," Wally continues.

Artemis holds her breath.

"And I have to say, it's quite easy to love you," Wally says.

He doesn't even blush. Robin feels a sudden urge of affection for his bro, and the rest of the Team stops glaring at him.

"What do you mean?" She tries to keep her voice even, but even she can't do that.

Suddenly he's flustered again. "Well- I- you- I-" he stammers. He can't form a proper sentence to save his life.

Artemis just watches in amusement.

"I- I can't explain it," Wally finally manages to say. Somehow, he's managed to walk so he's right in front of her.

She raises an eyebrow.

"But I can show you," he offers.

She's confused at first.

But then his warm green eyes blink at her and something warm is pressed against her mouth.

Suddenly she realizes that he's kissing her.

And her heart leaps from her chest to their combined mouths.

Wally West is kissing Artemis Crock.

She gives a small squeal of excitement? happiness? surprise?

Wally wraps his arms around her and she's running her hands up and down his surprisingly muscled chest. They're kissing, and it's pure bliss.

She's used to the cold- the cold glares that her dad shot at her, the slightly warmer fake glares that Jade pretended to send to her (even though she was just playing along with Dad's image, it still hurt).

She's used to everyone leaving her, leaving her alone.

She's used to distance, to shields, to secrecy, to masks.

But Wally's so warm and even though he's not saying it, she can hear him telling her, "_I'll never leave you." _and he knows who she is and she can finally be herself. She's happy.

She's _happy_.

Artemis deepens the kiss and the Team starts jeering, but in a friendly way.

She smiles into the kiss, her eyes closed. But when she creaks open her right eye, Wally's eyes are closed, but she can also see Robin, grinning at her and giving her a double thumbs-up. And M'gann, clapping and cheering, a humongous smile on her face, and Zatanna, whooping, and Kaldur, politely smiling, and Conner, yelling out excitedly.

She closes that one eye and she knows that she could stay in that moment forever.

But these moments don't last forever, and they reluctantly pull back.

"You finally did it, Wally!" Robin cried.

Wally just grins at her. "I love you, Artemis. Don't leave," he murmurs into her ear.

Only Conner can hear.

But he's smart enough to pretend that he didn't.

_I love you. _Those words ring into her mind. She'll never forget them.

"Same. I won't leave," she whispers.

He grins and they pull completely away.

"I'm not leaving," Artemis announces as soon as the Team's noises die down.

"Good," M'gann says at the same time Robin mutters, "Like you'd want to, after today."

And she blushes tomato red and Wally blushes too. But they're not really embarrassed. No, not at all. It's going to be rough, explaining all this to the League. Because now that she thinks of it, she didn't even tell them.

Partly because she knew, somewhere in her heart, that it would all work out.

She exhales and so does Wally.

Everything's going to be okay!

Everything's going to be okay.

_Everything's going to be okay. _

It's the first time that Artemis has been able to say those words inside her head, with actual conviction.

Because for the first time, it's true.

* * *

><p>Jade smiles as she presses the End button on the camera.

Her little sister, her little Alice, just found her first and only love.

And had her first kiss.

Apparently, she didn't need to threaten the redhead after all.

"Cheshire! Get out here!" Sportsmaster demands.

Jade shoots a dirty glance out the door, knowing that he can't see her.

Then she stands and sets the camera on the ground.

With one, smooth move, she brings her heel down on the camera, shattering it into a million tiny pieces.

Because she's wearing gloves, she carefully deposits every small piece inside her own personal shredder and it's grinded to a bunch of dust.

Once she's satisfied that the evidence is gone, she puts her mask on and she's Cheshire. She makes a mental note to sneak back to the Cave to destroy the cameras she placed there. Because she didn't really need to place those cameras there, at least not for professional use. She only put them up to see what happened to her sister.

Jade's okay now. Because Artemis is okay.

* * *

><p>I wasn't exactly sure what the ending was supposed to be, so I just winged it. I mean, I knew that Wally had to confess his love for Artemis, but I just didn't know exactly how he would do that. Turns out, it's fine. I think. Let me know what you think! And this is the last chapter.

Thanks! Peace out.

~rainbowunicorns459

End
file.